



Recognising and Tackling Discrimination: HCPC Resources for Registrants and Learners

As professionals working within educational psychology and wider education settings, AEP members are committed to promoting inclusion, equity and respect for all. However, discrimination remains a reality for many EPs, trainees and learners. Discrimination can have a significant impact on wellbeing, professional confidence and career progression.

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) has developed dedicated resources to support registrants and learners who experience or witness discrimination in workplace and education settings. The guidance makes clear that discrimination in any form is unacceptable and that all HCPC registrants have a responsibility to contribute to safe, inclusive and respectful professional environments. [[hcpc-uk.org](https://www.hcpc-uk.org)]

What Is Discrimination?

Under the Equality Act 2010, discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic. These characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Discrimination may be:

- A one-off incident or a pattern of behaviour.
- It can result from decisions made at work or from how people behave towards each other.
- Carried out by colleagues, managers, service users, parents, carers, learners or placement providers.
- Direct, indirect, discriminatory harassment or victimisation.

What Should You Do If You Experience Discrimination?

The HCPC encourages registrants to recognise that discriminatory behaviour is never acceptable and that support is available. If you experience discrimination, consider:

1. Recording what happened

- Keep a factual record of incidents, including dates, times, locations, individuals involved and any witnesses.



2. Seeking support

- Speak with a trusted colleague, supervisor, line manager, tutor, placement supervisor or union representative.

3. Reviewing organisational policies

- Familiarise yourself with your employer's or education provider's dignity at work, grievance, equality and anti-bullying policies.

4. Using formal reporting procedures

- Where appropriate, raise concerns through internal reporting mechanisms or grievance procedures.

5. Accessing professional support

- seek advice from the AEP
- occupational health service
- employee assistance programme.

What If You Witness Discrimination?

The HCPC emphasises that tackling discrimination is everyone's responsibility and not solely the responsibility of those directly affected.

If you witness discriminatory behaviour:

- Offer support to the individual affected.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour where it is safe and appropriate to do so.
- Report concerns through relevant organisational channels.
- Act in accordance with professional and ethical responsibilities.

Creating inclusive workplaces requires active allyship and a willingness to challenge behaviours that undermine dignity and respect.

How Can AEP Members Report Discrimination?

The most appropriate reporting route will depend on the circumstances.

Within Your Organisation

Members should usually report concerns through established workplace or university procedures, such as:

- Dignity at Work or harassment policies
- Line managers or senior leaders.
- Human Resources departments.



- Formal grievance procedures.

During Training or Placement

Trainee educational psychologists may wish to report concerns to:

- Their placement supervisor.
- University tutors or programme directors.
- University student support services.
- Equality and diversity teams.

HCPC Standards

The HCPC standards are clear that discrimination is unacceptable. Where discriminatory behaviour raises concerns about a registrant's fitness to practise or professional conduct, these concerns may be reported to the HCPC.

HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (Standards 1.5, 1.6 & 1.7)

require registrants to: Respond appropriately to the needs of all individuals and groups in practice, recognising that these needs may be influenced by differences of any kind, including protected characteristics, intersectional experiences, and cultural backgrounds.

- Recognise the potential impact of their own values, beliefs, and personal biases, including unconscious biases, on their practice and take personal responsibility to ensure that all service users and carers are treated with respect, dignity, and fairness.
- You must raise concerns about colleagues if you think that they are treating people unfairly, that their personal values, biases and beliefs have led them to discriminate against service users, carers or colleagues, or if they have detrimentally impacted the care, treatment or other services that they provide. This should be done following the relevant procedures within your practice and should maintain the safety of all involved.

HCPC Standards of Proficiency (Standards 5.1, 5.3 & 5.6) also require registrants to:

- Respond appropriately to the needs of all groups and individuals in practice, recognising that this can be affected by difference of any kind including, but not limited to, protected characteristics, intersectional experiences and cultural differences.



- Recognise the potential impact of your own values, beliefs and personal biases (which may be unconscious) on practice and take personal action to ensure all service users and carers are treated appropriately with respect and dignity.
- Actively challenge these barriers [to inclusion], supporting the implementation of change wherever possible.

AEP Support

Members who have experienced discrimination may also wish to seek support and guidance from the AEP. You can access the [AEP Guide to Discrimination Law here](#). In the first instance, you should contact your local workplace representative or contact the AEP by emailing enquiries@aep.org.uk, as you may wish to follow your employer's grievance procedure with AEP support.

Building Inclusive Professional Cultures

EPs play a vital role in promoting equality and inclusion for children & young people and families. The same principles must apply within our own professional environments. By recognising discrimination, supporting colleagues and making use of available reporting and support mechanisms, we can help ensure the profession remains safe, inclusive and welcoming for all.

Further information

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/meeting-our-standards/discrimination>

<https://www.acas.org.uk/discrimination-and-the-law>

<https://www.acas.org.uk/if-youve-been-discriminated-against-at-work>

<https://www.acas.org.uk/what-an-employer-can-do-to-prevent-discrimination>